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1	COMMISSIONERS	D 10 A 11 D0
2 3	BOB STUMP – Chairman GARY PIERCE BRENDA BURNS	R 18 A II: 38  - COMMISSION UST COMTROL
. 4	BOB BURNS SUSAN BITTER SMITH	
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6	BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION	
7 8	IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER	Docket No. W-04254A-12-0204
9	COMPANY, LLC FOR APPROVAL OF FINANCING TO INSTALL A WATER LINE FROM THE WELL ON TIEMAN TO WELL	
10	NO. 1 ON TOWERS.	
11	IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER	Docket No. W-04254A-12-0205
12	COMPANY, LLC FOR APPROVAL OF FINANCING TO PURCHASE THE WELL	
13	NO. 4 SITE AND THE COMPANY VEHICLE.	
14	IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION	Docket No. W-04254A-12-0206
15 16	OF MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER COMPANY, LLC FOR APPROVAL OF FINANCING FOR AN 8,000-GALLON HYDRO-PNEUMATIC TANK.	
17	IN THE MATTER OF THE RATE	Docket No. W-04254A-12-0207
18	APPLICATION OF MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER COMPANY, LLC.	Docket No. W-04234A-12-0207
19	JOHN E. DOUGHERTY,	DOCKET NO. W-0425A-11-0323
20	COMPLAINANT,	
21	V.	Anizona Corporation Commission
22 23	MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER COMPANY, LLC	UUCKETED
24	RESPONDENT	MAR 1 8 2013
25		DOGKETLOW

FENNEMORE CRAIG
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PHOENIX

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER COMPANY, LLC FOR APPROVAL OF A RATE INCREASE.

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF MONTEZUMA RIMROCK WATER COMPANY, LLC FOR APPROVAL OF A FINANCING APPLICATION.

DOCKET NO. W-04254A-08-0361

DOCKET NO. W-04254A-08-0362

## ANSWER TO AMENDED FORMAL COMPLAINT

Montezuma Rimrock Water Company LLC ("MRWC" or "Company") hereby answers the Amended Formal Complaint and Motion Add Allegation XVII filed by Mr. Dougherty on February 27, 2013 ("Amended Complain"). The Company responds and addresses each allegation asserted by Mr. Dougherty in the Amended Complaint, the original complaint filed on August 23, 2011, the Motion to Modify Formal Complaint with Additional Allegation XV filed on September 13, 2011, the Motion to Modify Formal Complaint with Allegation XVII filed on September 23, 2011 and the Motion to Add Allegation XVII filed on February 12, 2013.

In the first 13 numbered paragraphs of the Amended Complaint, Mr. Dougherty does not assert any factual allegations against the Company. Rather, Mr. Dougherty offers his interpretations of the Company's Answer to Complaint filed on September 30, 2011. In response to those paragraphs, the Company alleges that its September 30, 2011 Answer speaks for itself.

In numbered paragraph 15 of the Amended Complaint, Mr. Dougherty states that "Complainant hereby withdraws Allegations III, V, VI and XVI from the Formal Complaint without prejudice." As such, Allegations III, V, VI and XVI are no longer at issue in this proceeding and should be dismissed.

In numbered paragraph 16 of the Amended Complaint, Mr. Dougherty states that "Complainant hereby withdraws Allegations VII, IX, XIII, XIV with prejudice." As such,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Amended Complaint at 2, ¶ 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Amended Complaint at 2, ¶ 16.

Allegations VII, IX, XIII and XIV are no longer at issue in this proceeding and should be dismissed with prejudice.

By process of elimination, the following allegations remain at issue in this docket: Allegations I, II, IV, VII, VIII, X, XI, XII, XV and XVII. The Company responds to each of those issues below.

1. Allegation I. For Allegation I, Mr. Dougherty alleges that "the Company did not seek or obtain Commission approval to enter into a long-term, \$32,000 debt in 2005 to acquire property for Well No. 4 in violation of ARS S40-30 and ARS S40-302." Mr. Dougherty further alleges that "the Company has willfully encumbered or spent ratepayer funds to pay for the undisclosed loan from 2005 through 2011 in violation of ARS S40-423 and ARS S40-424." The Company denies these allegations contained in the Amended Complaint.

In 2005, the Company agreed to purchase Lot 500 in Lake Montezuma Estates, Unit Two, for \$35,000 from property owner Anna Barbara Brunner as the proposed site for location of Well No. 4. The Company made a down payment of \$3,000 and the property transfer was subject to the Company's payment of \$32,000 for the property. On or about November 16, 2005, Ms. Brunner recorded a Warranty Deed to Montezuma Rimrock Water Co, LLC conveying Lot 500 in Lake Montezuma Estates, Unit Two (Yavapai County Recorder No. B-4335 P-428) to the Company. As part of the purchase agreement, the parties also recorded a Deed of Trust and Assignment of Rents with the Yavapai County Recorder (Recorder No. B-4335 P-429) by which the Company as Trustor conveyed the property in trust to Yavapai Title Agency as Trustee and Ms. Brunner as beneficiary as security for payment of the remaining \$32,000 purchase price.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Amended Complaint at 3, ¶ 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Id*.

funds to pay for the undisclosed loan from 2005 through 2011." In this case, that claim is not actionable in a complaint proceeding before the Commission for several reasons. First and foremost, there are no ratepayer funds at issue. The Company is a private water utility and ratepayers do not possess any ownership interest in any Company funds or property. As the United States Supreme Court has explained, "[c]ustomers pay for service, not for the property used to render it....By paying bills for service they do not acquire any interest, legal or equitable, in the property used for their convenience or in the funds of the company. Property purchased out of moneys received for service belongs to the company just as does that purchased out of proceeds of its bonds and stock."<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Dougherty claims that the Company "willfully encumbered or spent ratepayer

Second, the purchase price for the subject property has been paid in full and there is not any outstanding long-term debt or encumbrances against utility property from this transaction. On August 22, 2011, Yavapai Title Agency recorded a Deed of Release and Full Reconveyance with the Yavapai County Recorder (Recorder No. B:4829, P:739) releasing all rights to the property and reconveying the property to the Company. As a result, the Company is the owner of the property, there is no existing long-term debt relating to that property and there are no Company funds at issue. Under these circumstances, any alleged violation of Commission statutes relating to the property did not result in any harm to the Company or its ratepayers.

Third and finally, it should be noted that Mr. Dougherty apparently has taken the position that Well No. 4 should not be included in the Company's rate case because that well is not currently being used by the Company in providing utility service. If true, the Deed of Trust for the property did not encumber any utility property used and useful in providing utility service to customers. As a matter of law, Allegation I should be dismissed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Bd. of Pub. Utility Comm'rs v. New York Tele. Co., 271 U.S. 23, 32 (1926).

2. Allegation II. In Allegation II, Mr. Dougherty claims that the "Company did not disclose material financial information to Commission staff during a 2009 audit – a \$32,000 long-term debt – that was used to calculate a permanent rate increase and whether the company could qualify for a \$165,000 WIFA loan. ... The failure to disclose the debt to staff when the Company submitted its 2007 annual report is a violation [of] ARS \$40-301, ARS \$40-302, R14-2-411(D)(1,2) and Commission Order 67583." The Company denies the claims and allegations set forth in Allegation II of the Amended Complaint and incorporates the responses noted above. Further, Mr. Dougherty does not have any standing to assert any actionable claims relating to Commission's Staff's 2009 audit. Commission Staff has not raised any issues relating to that 2009 audit. The Company did not violate A.A.C. R14-2-411(D)(1,2) and the Company did not violate Decision No. 67583.

3. <u>Allegation IV</u>. In Allegation IV of the original Complaint, Mr. Dougherty alleged that the "Company improperly includes Well No. 4, DWR 55-213141, as part of its "Water Company Plant Description" in its Annual Reports in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Well No. 4 has never been approved for operation by Yavapai County and the Company does not have a 'Certificate of Compliance' to operate the well because it was built in violation of the Yavapai County Water Code and encroaches on neighboring property rights." The Company denies that the allegations contained in Allegation IV warrant any complaint against MRWC.

Although the Company currently does not have County approval for operation of the well, the Company is in the process of resolving those issues through condemnation proceedings to obtain encroachment rights and then the Company will undertake permit proceedings with Yavapai County. Well No. 4 is not currently being used by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Amended Complaint at 2, ¶ 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Original Complaint at 3-4, ¶ IV.

Company. Allegation IV is not an actionable complaint item and does not state or justify any action against the Company. Further, those allegations did not harm any customers of the Company. To the extent the zoning and permit issues surrounding Well No. 4 are not resolved by the time of the rate case hearing and the Company is not using Well No. 4 in providing utility service to customers, then the Commission likely will exclude Well No. 4 from rate base or consideration of rates in this docket.<sup>8</sup>

4. In Allegation VII, Mr. Dougherty alleges that the Allegation VII. "Company is in violation of state and federal safe water standards and is operating under an Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Consent Order (since June 2010) requiring customers to make an appointment to obtain bottled water from the company's office." The Company admits that it is operating under an ADEQ Consent Order. The Company denies that it is currently violating any safe drinking water ADEO issued an Approval of Construction Partial Approval on standards for arsenic. November 21, 2012 authorizing the Company to begin operation of the Arsenic Treatment Facility. The Company is currently operating the Arsenic Treatment Facility through use of Well No. 1 and has complied with applicable arsenic standards for drinking water. The Company received Drinking Water Inorgranic Chemical Analysis Reports from ADEO for water samples taken on November 29-30, 2012 and December 1-2, 2012, with arsenic results reported well below the MCL of 0.01 for arsenic. The Company provided those test results to Commission Staff on December 13, 2012. Under these circumstances, Allegation VII should be dismissed as a matter of law and fact.

Further, Mr. Dougherty does not have standing to assert the issues raised in Allegation VII. Mr. Dougherty is not a current customer of the Company and Mr.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In that event, once the County zoning issues and condemnation proceedings are concluded, the Company would seek to include Well No. 4 and all of its costs as post-test plant in this rate case or in the next rate case filed by the Company.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Original Complaint at 3, ¶ VII.

Dougherty has undertaken a number of actions in an effort to prevent the Company from constructing and operating an arsenic treatment facility, including this Complaint proceeding, motions to prevent construction of the Arsenic Treatment Plant and filing of complaints and objections with Yavapai County and ADEQ. Even further, Mr. Dougherty filed objections with WIFA relating to potential financing for the Arsenic Treatment Facility. Mr. Dougherty's actions have jeopardized the interests of MRWC customers and, to say the least, Mr. Dougherty has unclean hands on these issues and should not be allowed to complain about the Company's arsenic levels in light of his efforts to oppose the Company's actions to address the arsenic issues.

5. <u>Allegation VIII.</u> In Allegation VIII, Mr. Dougherty alleges that the "Company is in violation of Decision No. 71317 in Docket W-04254-09-0361, 0362 since December 31, 2009 by failing to obtain an ADEQ Certificate of Approval for Well No. 4." In Docket Nos. W-04254-08-0361 and -0362, Staff recommended that the Company be required to file an Approval of Construction (AOC) for the arsenic treatment plant to be funded by the WIFA loan and an AOC for the new Well No. 4.

The Company acknowledges that it does not have an AOC for Well No. 4, but the Company is undertaking all reasonable efforts to obtain ADEQ and County approvals for Well No. 4. Well No. 4 is not currently being used by the Company and the Company's failure to obtain an AOC for Well No. 4 did not harm any customers of the Company and does not justify any complaint action against the Company. Further, MRWC received an extension from ADEQ for the AOC until October 2013.

Again, Mr. Dougherty is not a current customer of the Company and Mr. Dougherty has undertaken a number of actions in an effort to prevent the Company from constructing and operating Well No. 4. Mr. Dougherty's actions have jeopardized the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Amended Complaint at 3, ¶ 20.

interests of the Company, existing and future MRWC customers and, to say the least, Mr. Dougherty has unclean hands on these issues.

6. <u>Allegation X.</u> In Allegation X, Mr. Dougherty alleges that the "Company provided incomplete and misleading statements to Commission investigators in January 2010 concerning its Yavapai County zoning issues related to Well No. 4. The Company's incomplete and misleading statements to ACC investigators is [sic] a violation of R14-2-411." The Company denies Allegation X.

On this claim, Mr. Dougherty does not state with any specificity what statements were made by the Company. Further, Mr. Dougherty does not have any standing or personal interests subject to a complaint proceeding relating to statements made to ACC Staff. Commission Staff has not filed any complaint or taken any action against the Company relating to any such statements. On these facts, Allegation X does not raise any actionable claim for violations of A.A.C. R14-2-411 Further, A.A.C. R14-2-411 addresses administrative and hearing requirements relating to customer service complaints and other administrative issues. Mr. Dougherty is not a customer of the Company.

- 7. Allegation XI. In Allegation XI, Mr. Dougherty alleges that the "Company improperly billed and collected an 'arsenic surcharge in December 2009 in violation of Commission Decision No. 71317." The Company acknowledges that the arsenic surcharge was improperly invoiced in December 2009.
- 8. <u>Allegation XII.</u> In Allegation XII, Mr. Dougherty alleges that the "Company improperly billed and collected an 'arsenic surcharge in April 2011 in violation of Commission Decision No. 71317." The Company acknowledges that the arsenic surcharge was improperly invoiced April 2011 and further alleges that the Company fully refunded such surcharges to customers.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Original Complaint at 3, ¶ XI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Original Complaint at 3, ¶ XII.

- 9. Allegation XV. In Allegation XV, Mr. Dougherty alleges that the "Company failed to immediately report to the Commission that [the] Company's records had been stolen during a series of burglaries that allegedly began in October 2009 and continued into 2010. Despite the serious impact to the Company from records being stolen, the Company failed to notify the police and make formal reports of the thefts." On this claim, the Company does not have any obligation to report such burglaries to the Commission or the police as alleged by Mr. Dougherty in this allegation. The Company's failure to report such incidents to the Commission or the police is not an actionable complaint item and the Company did not violate any Commission statutes, rules or regulations or Decision No. 67583 as alleged by Mr. Dougherty. Even further, the Company is not at fault for the illegal and harmful conduct of third persons responsible for such incidents.
- 10. <u>Allegation XVII.</u> In Allegation XVII, Mr. Dougherty asserts a variety of claims relating to the lease agreements for the arsenic treatment facility. The Company denies all of the claims contained in Allegation XVII of the Amended Complaint.
- (a) To start, Mr. Dougherty claims that "Montezuma knowingly and willfully violated the January 4, 2012, March 12, 2012 and April 9, 2012 Procedural Orders in Docket W-2454A-08-0361, W-4254A-08-0362 by failing to docket a March 22, 2012 Capital Lease agreement between Montezuma and Nile River Leasing, LLC for an arsenic treatment building. Instead, the Company docketed a purported March 16, 2012 lease agreement between Ms. Patricia Olsen, personally, and Nile River leasing for the building. This action was undertaken to circumvent Commission approval of capital leases in violation of ARS S40-301, ARS S40-301, ARSS40-424 and ARS S40-425."<sup>13</sup>

On these issues, Ms. Olsen originally executed a lease agreement personally with Nile River Leasing for the arsenic treatment building on March 16, 2012. The Company

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Amended Complaint at 4-5, ¶ 27(A-E).

docketed that agreement in case no. 08-0361 on April 13, 2012. At that time, the Company believed that the agreement had been properly executed by Nile River Leasing. MRWC received a copy of that Nile River lease agreement in the mail and there is nothing illegal or improper with Ms. Olsen executing that lease agreement personally.

During that time, the Company also received a copy of the lease agreement between Nile River and the Company and the Company executed a Terms and Conditions of Lease Agreement with Nile River Leasing on March 22, 2012. Eventually, funding was not approved for the March 16 lease agreement so the parties used the March 22, 2012 agreement as the final agreement between the parties.

The Company acknowledges that it should have advised the Commission and ALJ of the new lease agreement. On that note, however, the Company also believes that Commission approval is not required for the March 22 lease agreement with Nile River because it is not a capital lease. That lease agreement is for the arsenic treatment facility building. The lease does not convey ownership of the building to MRWC at the end of the lease term, the lease does not give MRWC the right to purchase the building at a bargain price at the end of the lease term and the term of the lease (36 months) is not 75% or more of the economic life of the asset. At this juncture, the Company cannot determine whether the present value of the rents, using the Company's incremental borrowing rate, is 90% or more of the fair market value of the building.

Aside from these issues, the Company also believes that the March 22 lease agreement was in the best interest of the Company and its customers by facilitating construction and operation of an arsenic treatment facility. The Company was subject to sanctions and penalties by ADEQ for failure to resolve the arsenic treatment problem and believed that it was necessary to enter the lease agreements for the arsenic treatment facility. Further, neither the Commission nor any customers have suffered any harm as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See April 26, 2012 memorandum from J. Michlik.

result of this lease agreement with Nile River and, in fact, customers have benefitted from construction and operation of the arsenic treatment facility.

(b) Mr. Dougherty also claims that "Montezuma knowingly and willfully violated the January 4, 2012, March 12, 2012 and April 9, 2012 Procedural Orders in Docket W-2454A-08-0361, W-4254A-08-0362 by failing to docket a Capital Lease agreement with Financial Pacific Leasing, LLC for an Arsenic Treatment Facility signed on or about April 3, 2012. Instead, the Company docketed a purported March 16, 2012 lease agreement between Ms. Patricia Olsen, personally, and Nile River leasing for the building. This action was undertaken to circumvent Commission approval of capital leases in violation of ARS S40-301, ARS S40-301, ARSS40-424 and ARS S40-425." <sup>15</sup>

The Company acknowledges the lease agreement with Financial Pacific is a capital lease and that the Company should have sought approval of that lease from the Commission. That lease agreement is for the arsenic treatment facility and was executed by the parties on May 2, 2012. The Company believes that the May 2, 2012 lease agreement with Financial Pacific was in the best interest of the Company and its customers by facilitating construction and operation of an arsenic treatment facility. Further, neither the Commission nor any customers have suffered any harm as a result of the Financial Pacific lease or the Company's failure to obtain Commission approval. The Company intended that the Commission would review the terms and conditions of that lease in its pending rate case. MRWC is a small water company and did not fully understand the need to seek prior Commission approval of a capital lease.

The Company also would note that the Financial Pacific lease was the only financing mechanism available to the Company for construction of the arsenic treatment plant. The Company originally intended to seek WIFA financing, but Mr. Dougherty filed objections with WIFA demanding that an environmental impact statement be undertaken

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Amended Complaint at 4-5, ¶ 27(B).

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relating to the use of Well No. 4 and operation of the arsenic treatment plant. In turn, WIFA required a environmental study. The Company could not afford the necessary costs for an environmental study as required by WIFA. As a result, MRWC had no choice but to seek private financing for the arsenic treatment facility and the Financial Pacific lease was the only option available to it. Ultimately, the Financial Pacific lease agreement was in the best interest of the Company and its customers by facilitating construction and operation of an arsenic treatment facility.

- (c) In the Amended Formal Complaint, Mr. Dougherty also alleges that the Company docketed a fraudulent lease agreement with Financial Pacific by docketing the May 2 lease agreement rather than the April 3 lease agreement. 16 The Company denies this allegation. This allegation is not an actionable complaint item. The Company and Financial Pacific executed lease agreements dated April 3, 2012 and May 2, 2012, but ultimately decided to use the May lease. There is absolutely nothing wrong with doing so and the Company did not violate any statutes, rules or laws. Further, Mr. Dougherty's suggestion that the Company committed fraud is silly and based on a misunderstanding of fraud under Arizona law. Neither the Commission nor any customers have suffered any harm as a result of the May 2, 2012 lease agreement with Financial Pacific. In fact, customers have benefitted from the lease agreement because it allowed the Company to construct and operate the arsenic treatment facility currently being used by the Company.
- (d) In the Amended Formal Complaint, Mr. Dougherty next alleges that the "Company has willfully spent or encumbered Ratepayer funds in connection with the execution of the unauthorized Capital Leases for the Arsenic Treatment building and Arsenic treatment equipment entered into by the Company in violation of ARS S40-423, ARS S40-424 and ARS S40-425." The Company denies this allegation for the reasons

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Amended Complaint at 4-5, ¶ 27(C).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Amended Complaint at 5, ¶ 27(D).

set forth above. Further, the Company is a private water utility and ratepayers do not possess any ownership interest in any Company funds or property.<sup>18</sup>

(e) The Company denies the allegations contained in paragraph 27(E) of the Amended Formal Complaint. Ms. Olsen originally intended to enter into the Kevlor Contract personally, but the Company ultimately decided to enter the contract with Kevlor. That Kevlor contract did not require Commission approval and the Company did not violate any statutes relating to the Kevlor contract.

Ultimately, the Commission should dismiss Mr. Dougherty's Amended Formal Complaint and all allegations contained therein. MRWC is a small water utility with limited resources and any action against the Company would not benefit the Commission or customers. It also should be noted that Mr. Dougherty has not asked for any relief that can be granted by the Commission under these circumstances. In his original complaint dated August 23, 2011, Mr. Dougherty asked that the Commission "consider revoking Montezuma Rimrock's Certificate of Convenience and Necessity." The Company is providing adequate water utility service to customers and Mr. Dougherty has not alleged, let alone shown, any reason for revoking the Company's CC&N. That's not to mention that Mr. Dougherty is not a customer of the Company.

On September 13, 2011, Mr. Dougherty submitted an additional pleading asking that "the Commission immediately remove Ms. Olsen as Company manager and install new management, on an interim basis." Not only has Mr. Dougherty not alleged any basis for granting such relief, but any such remedy would be a taking subject to just compensation. And, again, Mr. Dougherty is not a customer of the Company. In that pleading, Mr Dougherty also asked that the Commission "direct staff to conduct an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Bd. of Pub. Utility Comm'rs v. New York Tele. Co., 271 U.S. 23, 32 (1926).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Original Complaint at 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Motion to Modify Formal Complaint with Additional Allegations and Two Additional Remedies dated September 13, 2011, at 2.

engineering and financial analysis related to extending a water service line from the Arizona Water Company, which already has sufficient water production capacity and an arsenic treatment facility, to MRWC's service area."21 Under the facts of this case, the Commission does not have justification to take away the Company's service territory and give it to another water utility as suggested by Mr. Dougherty. Nor could the Commission lawfully do so under the facts of this case. RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 18th day of March, 2013. 8 FENNEMORE CRAIG 10  $By_{-}$ Todd C. Wiley 11 2394 E. Camelback Road, Suite 600

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Attorneys for Montezuma Rimrock Water

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An original and 13 copies 15 of the foregoing was filed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2013, 16

with:

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**Docket Control** Arizona Corporation Commission 18 1200 West Washington Street Phoenix, Arizona 85007 19

A copy of the foregoing 20 was hand delivered/mailed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2013, to: 21

Sarah N. Harpring 22 Administrative Law Judge Arizona Corporation Commission 23 1200 W. Washington

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 $^{21}$  *Id.* at 2-3.

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